

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5734

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 0349

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OAS, SHUM, UY, PPDC
SUBJ: REPLY TO MENDEZ LETTER OF JANUARY 11 TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 0104 (B) MONTEVIDEO 0103

1. THE ANTICIPATED OAS REJECTION OF THE GOU'S INVITATION TO HOST THE VIII OASGA (OR EVEN THE OUTSIDE POSSIBILITY THE GOU WILL WITHDRAW ITS OFFER) WILL BE A BLOW TO URUGUAYAN PRIDE AND PRESTIGE, THOUGH THE GOU CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACT AS IF SUCH IS NOT THE CASE. INTERNATIONALLY, THE GOU (OR ELEMENTS IN IT) MAY WELL TRY TO PORTRAY THE USG AS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DEFEAT. INTERNALLY, THE MODERATE MILITARY GROUP WHICH TRIES TO SAVE THE SITUATION THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IAHRC WILL PROBABLY MOVE AGAINST THE HARD-LINE CIVILIAN GROUP (ROVIRA/ALVAREZ/ROCA) RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEBACLE. TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, THE ROVIRA CAMP CAN BE EXPECTED TO DISTORT THE USG POSITION AND OUR ACTIONS. THUS, IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPLY TO PRESIDENT MENDEZ TO RECOUNT THE HISTORY OF OUR DEALINGS WITH URUGUAY ON THE IAHRC ISSUE FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BILATERAL TO THE JANUARY 31 VOTE AND TO EXPLAIN BULLY OUR POSITION ON THE OASGA INVITATION. A LETTER WHICH MAKES A PUBLIC RECORD FOR ALL TO SEE WILL AID HE
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MODERATE ELEMENT HERE TO DEFEND ITS ACTIONS AND ITS DEALINGS OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS WITH THE USG, AND WE WOULD INFORMALLY MAKE THE REPLY AVAILABLE TO THESE OFFICIALS AFTER IT IS TRANSMITTED OFFICIALLY. INTERNATIONALLY, IF WE ARE ATTACKED PUBLICLY, PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE, AND OUR ACTIONS AND POLICIES DISTORTED, WE CAN USE THE LETTER AS AN HISTORIC RECORD OF OUR ACTIONS

AND POSITION, IF WE SO CHOSE.

3. WITH THE FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND, I RECOMMEND THAT THE FOLLOWING BE COVERED IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPLY TO MENDEZ IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE JANUARY 31 SHOWDOWN IN THE OAS (FOR CONVENIENCE POINTS ARE STATED AS SUGGESTED TEXT. QUOTE I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR LETTER OF JANUARY 11. AND THE OPPORTUNITY IT GIVES ME TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE WHICH WE INITIATED DURING OUR SEPTEMBER 1977 MEETING. I FULLY SHARE THE DESIRE EXPRESSED IN YOUR LETTER TO RE-ESTABLISH ON A FIRM BASIS THE TRADITIONAL CLOSE RELATIONS THAT HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND TO REMOVE THE SERIOUS IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCH RELATIONS WHICH CURRENTLY EXIST. I BELIEVE THAT DIALOGUE BETWEEN US WHICH CAN PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR POSITIVE ACTIONS BY OUR GOVERNMENTS CAN HELP US TO REALIZE THIS SHARED OBJECTIVE.

DURING OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING AND IN MY OCTOBER 31 LETTER TO YOU, I EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO URUGUAY'S IMAGE ABROAD OF PERMITTING A VISIT BY THE KIND OF RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION THAT COULD MAKE PUBLIC AN OBJECTIVE REPORT ON ITS FINDINGS IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS. ACCORDINGLY, I URGED YOU TO CONSIDER ACCEPTING A VISIT BY THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IAHRC) OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, AS MANY OTHER MEMBER STATES HAVE DONE. HOWEVER, DURING OUR MEETING

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AND IN YOUR REPLY OF NOVEMBER 10, YOU INDICATED THAT A VISIT BY THIS COMMISSION WAS "DEFINITELY UNACCEPTABLE" TO YOUR GOVERNMENT. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, YOU INVITED ME TO SEND ANY PERSON OR GROUP TO URUGUAY TO VIEW THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND ASSURED ME THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVEN COMPLETE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND FREEDOM TO TALK WITH ANYONE THEY MIGHT WISH. WE, THEREFORE, BEGAN WORKING ON A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS INVITATION.

IN MID-DECEMBER 1977, THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY, WITHOUT ANY PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, INVITED THE OAS TO HOLD ITS VIII GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN URUGUAY. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OFFICIALS OF THE GOU PRESENTED THIS INVITATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE OAS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 0349

EXDIS

AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ITS MEMBERS TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES
THE REALITY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN URUGUAY,
WHICH YOU MAINTAIN HAS BEEN DISTORTED BY FALSE INFORMATION
AND CALUMNY. ON JANUARY 11, 1978, YOU WROTE REQUESTING MY
SUPPORT FOR THIS INVITATION, INDICATING IN YOUR LETTER
THAT THIS OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
WAS ONE OF ITS PURPOSES.

ALTHOUGH MY GOVERNMENT APPRECIATED THE OASGA INVITATION
AS AN EXPRESSION OF TRADITIONAL URUGUAYAN HOSPITALITY,
WE ALSO HAD TO VIEW IT WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF YOUR
GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INTEGRAL AND IMPORTANT
BODIES OF THE OAS. WE CONSIDERED THIS FUNDAMENTAL BECAUSE
PROTECTION OF THE BASIC INTEGRITY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN
SYSTEM REQUIRES THAT A MEMBER STATE ACCEPT, AND EFFECTIVELY
COMPLY WITH, ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS WITH
REGARD TO ALL ORGANS OF THE OAS AND NOT JUST WITH THOSE
ORGANS THAT IT SELECTIVELY MAY CHOOSE TO ACCEPT. WE THERE-
FORE MADE CLEAR TO YOUR AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS AND TO YOUR
FOREIGN MINISTER, AS WELL AS TO OTHER MEMBER GOVERNMENTS,
THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY'S
RELATIONS WITH THE IAHRG BE CLARIFIED, AND SPECIFICALLY THAT
IT SHOULD GIVE A CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL INDICATION THAT THE
COMMISSION WOULD BE WELCOME TO VISIT URUGUAY SHOULD IT WISH
TO DO SO IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES
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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS THAT THE OAS, WITH URUGUAY'S SUPPORT,
HAS GIVEN TO THE COMMISSION. WE BELIEVED THIS POSITION
WAS ESPECIALLY JUSTIFIED BY THE IMPLICATION IN THE STATE-
MENTS OF URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS AND YOUR LETTER TO ME THAT THE
VISIT OF THE OASGA WOULD IN EFFECT SUBSTITUTE FOR A VISIT
BY THE IAHRG.

ALTHOUGH THE GOU WAS AWARE OF OUR POSITION AT THE TIME OF YOUR REQUEST TO ME, I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE OVERALL POSITIVE TONE OF YOUR LETTER AND YOUR EXPRESSED DESIRE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH MY GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE OUR TRADITIONAL CLOSE RELATIONS AND TO REMOVE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY. WE THEREFORE, THROUGH OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE OAS AND OUR AMBASSADOR IN MONTEVIDEO, OFFERED OUR GOOD OFFICES TO YOU TO HELP RESOLVE THE IMPASSE BETWEEN URUGUAY AND THE IAHC. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS OFFER AND PARTICULARLY BY THE EFFORT YOU MADE IN SENDING A SPECIAL DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO EXPLORE A SOLUTION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IAHC. UNFORTUNATELY, THE FAILURE OF YOUR AMBASSADOR TO REQUEST A POSTPONEMENT OF FINAL OAS CONSIDERATION OF THE URUGUAYAN INVITATION, DEPRIVED YOUR SPECIAL DELEGATION OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE ADEQUATE TIME TO PURSUE THIS POSSIBILITY. WHEN A FINAL VOTE WAS FORCED IN THE OAS ON JANUARY 31, THE USG THEREFORE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED POSITION, VOTED AGAINST (OR ABSTAINED ON) ACCEPTING THE URUGUAYAN INVITATION TO HOST THE VIII OASGA.

ALTHOUGH IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE FOR MY GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT YOUR INVITATION TO THE OASGA, I BELIEVE THAT EVENTS OF THE PAT FEW WEEKS DID PROVIDE US A WIRTH-WHILE OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE IN GREATER DEPTH OUR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS ON THE ISSUED INVOLVED AND TO COOPERATE IN
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ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES. I HOPE THAT WE CAN CONTINUE IN THIS VEIN. YOU WILL BE HEARING FROM US SOON REGARDING YOUR INVITATION TO ME TO SEND ANY PERSON OR GROUP TO URUGUAY. UNQUOTE.
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